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say that a native would give anything he possessed or do anything he was asked simply in order to get a piece of meat. White men get carriers easily if they are reputed to be good shots. A chief is readily supplied with tribute labour if he has a hunter able to get him meat. Each kill is the subject of universal conversation for days. Every atom of a killed beast is devoured down to the ultimate entrail, in whatever state of decay. Small shreds of flesh are dried over the fire and lovingly stored in a corner of the owner's hut, whatever the smell. Different parts of the animal are regularly graded in order of preference and are distributed according to rank or position in the kinship group. Choice morsels are strapped on bicycle carriers and carried long distances in scorching sun as presents for chiefs. I timed a three-year-old girl during the hunger season, crying for nearly two hours 'just for a little piece of meat', but it must be admitted that this was in a village near a white settlement where she must have known that meat could have been got if her parents had had the money to pay for it.

Fish is not valued so highly as meat, but it certainly ranks as the next favourite relish and it is more easily obtained. Caterpillars, which form a very common relish during the rainy season, are not considered as meat, nor do they form a favourite relish, although they must certainly be reckoned as providing animal protein.

This attitude to meat shows in a striking fashion the way in which a physiological craving easily accounted for in an area of pronounced shortage of animal protein and salt, becomes associated with all sorts of social and psychological desires. Meat is not only good to eat but it is so rare as to make a break in the daily monotony of food and life. It is a sudden unexpected stroke of good fortune and therefore means that the spirits are on the mortals' side. It means plenty and the royal way of living at the chief's court. It is an occasion for a feast. For all these reasons a village sometimes reacts to the presence of meat in a way that is quite out of keeping with its purely physiological value. This is specially the case when the supply of meat is unusually large. When a buck has been distributed in a small village, the natives claim that it is the meat itself which makes them feel strong, and keen to dance all night and to work next day. But in reality it is probably their excitement at the sudden change of diet, their pleasure at the sight of

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262 records taken during a plentiful season showed that only five different relishes were used on an average during a period of twenty-three days. Only one cultivator had stored or gathered as many as nine different forms of *umunani*, and he was a man of unusual intelligence. At another village in the hunger season four out of six families ate mushrooms only with their porridge for five days out of six, and this was considered usual at that time of year. Mrs. Gore-Browne states that in the thirty-two villages she visited between July and January *katapa*, the relish made from cassava leaves, was practically the only food eaten. Whether the Bemba really suffer more severely from monotony of diet than the average English working-class family I do not know. Bread, butter, jam, tea, meat, and vegetables probably recur with the same frequency in such households as do millet, porridge and relish in that of the Bemba. Nor is it easy to know whether a monotonous diet is harmful in itself if it is well balanced, but it is certainly in times of shortage of millet that the native [435] complains of the lack of variety. At this season I have seen Bemba pay quite exorbitant prices for dried fish bought from a passing trader 'because we are so sick of eating pumpkin'. It would seem that a kind of despair had set in, and in this mood they were willing to pay anything to get a change of food, however bad the bargain they were making.[1]

(*f*) *Foods and social status.* Finally, the Bemba, like ourselves, have attached a kind of snobbish value to different foodstuffs. This is roughly correlated with the traditional beliefs in the strength and staying power of the dishes, but not entirely. As 262 presents of honour, beer may be given, unthreshed millet, meat, ●431 fish, or honey. But it is almost an insult to give a man of rank a basket of maize. I once saw the late Nkula presented with such food by some villagers when travelling round his district, but he gave it contemptuously to the children of his retinue. Citimukulu also passed through a village where I was staying during a month of scarcity after locust raids. The people knew he was short of relish for his followers but did not dare to offer him caterpillars—their only supply that day—in public. His wives had to beg surreptitiously behind closed doors.

262 Roughly speaking, uncultivated plants are less highly thought of than cultivated. Some of the wild leaf relishes really are

[1] Cf. also Chap. XII on trading habits.

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or animal. They can therefore have little appreciable dietetic importance.

(*b*) *Domestic animals.* We have seen from this account that ritual avoidances of food do not seriously affect the diet of large sections of the Bemba community. On the other hand it is not true to say that all available sources of food in the environment are exploited. The Bemba are not a pastoral people and could not keep cattle in large numbers because of the tsetse-fly. On the other hand sheep and goats are quite widely distributed in certain areas, and most households keep chickens and some pigeons. All these domestic animals are called *ifitekwa* or 'things kept', but in no case are *ifitekwa* kept primarily for meat or bred for that purpose. Goats or sheep may be given as a present to a chief or a European; dedicated to an ancestral spirit after successful recovery from illness; or given as compensation to an injured person for the loss of a limb or an eye. They may be killed and used as meat, but always on some such ceremonial occasion, never in case of pure hunger. Chickens are more numerous and less valuable, but even then a chicken is never killed 'just for food', even in the hunger season. Fowls are the ordinary present of honour for a chief or visitor of high status, and provide the ceremonial meal at a marriage or initiation ceremony. While there is no particularly sacred attitude towards chicken, a man will say, 'If I kill a chicken just to eat, I shall soon have none left.' That is to say he does not breed poultry scientifically, put down sittings of eggs, or calculate the number of chickens he may expect to get; nor does he make any attempt to feed them. Hens run about the village and lay their eggs wherever they please, and some of these sittings are finally hatched. But each new brood is regarded, with some justification, as a separate piece of good fortune for which the owner is not responsible, and which he is never certain will be repeated.[1] It is for this reason that he considers chickens should not be wasted or 'just eaten' and he will not part with eggs unless he can get money from a European for them. Teaching of scientific rearing of poultry would overcome the reluctance to use eggs. There is no fundamental magic belief at stake.

The Bemba attitude to pigeons is characteristic. These birds

[1] A number of magic rites are associated with the care of poultry such as the disposal of the eggshells at the crossroads, &c., and these may be taken as an indication of the measure of uncertainty the native feels on the question.

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their village life, and, as in most other Bantu societies, the common, and sometimes the essential way of fulfilling social obligations. Beer is the present of honour between kinsmen. It is carried to chiefs as tribute, used to reward labour, or given as an offering to spirits. Nowadays, it may be one of the few ways by which a woman, left deserted by her husband, can make money for clothes.[1] Men cultivate extra ground in order to have enough millet for brewing. Abundance of beer is the glory of a commoner's hospitality, or a chief's court. Without it tribal councils cannot be held, and marriage or initiation ceremonies do not take place. For all these reasons it is impossible to describe the physical effects of native beer-drinking without knowing the part it plays in the Bemba's whole social life. *Ubwalua* is served in big calabashes holding about 2 or 3 gallons, or in disused petrol tins. It consists of a thick brown sludge to which hot water is added constantly throughout the evening so that the brew gets gradually weaker and weaker.[2] It is drunk through a hollow reed two or three gulps at a time. It is a cloudy fluid, often full of gritty particles, with a clear sharp taste not unlike the bitter flavour of English beer. Most natives become positively lyrical as to its qualities. They say it makes them rejoice (*ukusansamuka*) and that it warms their hearts (*ukukafyo mutima*)—the ordinary phrase used for getting excited and also angry. Old councillors at the chief's court who have become used to a regular supply of beer, complain bitterly if they are deprived of it. They say that it is bad for them to eat 'cold food', i.e. ordinary meals, and that they need something to 'burn their stomachs just there' (with a hand laid on the spot), and in fact beer must be much easier to digest in old age than most other Bemba foods.

Beer is recognized as making a man more talkative, liable to quarrel, or indulge in illicit love-making, and men whose hearts get hot quickly, to repeat the native phrase, are avoided at beer-drinks, if possible, because they may involve their friends in legal liabilities. I have even heard of cases where Bemba refused to marry into families with a reputation for becoming excitable when drunk. But drunkenness itself is not despised. In fact the drunkard

[1] The sale of beer is illegal in this district, but it is practically impossible to prevent the trading of small quantities.

[2] In samples taken at the beginning and at the end of an evening respectively, Dr. Widdowson found that the alcohol content varied from 4·44 per cent. to 2·10 per cent. (I am indebted to Mr. Douglas Miller of the Education Department for dispatching these samples.)

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576 867 even seen a grown-up man seize a piece of fish from a small sister of 8, who expressed absolutely no surprise. An older girl will catch the wrist of a younger sister who has been given some snuff and scrape the precious powder out of the young girl's hand, leaving her only a little pinch for herself. The younger sister may make a face, but will not protest. In the same way I have seen a young husband call to his wife to throw him a lemon she had been given. She exclaimed: 'You crocodile you!' but threw him the fruit quite good-naturedly. Hence the rights of the elder or the headman or the Chief described in Chap. XIII, are based on beliefs very early inculcated, of what are a relative's dues. Here again the different attitude of European mothers is noticeable. In a society in which individual initiative is on the whole encouraged, and age has no particular prerogatives, we tend to see that the youngest child gets his fair share at the dinner table or in the nursery and often teach the elder children to 'Give it to Baby first'. The Bemba mother on the contrary always says: 'Let your elder brother (*umukalamba uobe*) have it! Give it to him first', and on this recognition of precedence the whole organization of daily life as well as the political system finally depends. Bemba children in fact do not seem to resent the rights of their elders, and I noticed that both little girls and boys often repeated the words *umukalamba uandi* ('my elder') in tones of great affection and pride. The con-
593 stant competition between the older and younger members of the family that is so pronounced in our society does not seem to exist.[1] We encourage our children to take a pride in their personal possessions, to handle them carefully, look after them, 'put them
[524] away'. Bemba children have no material possessions beyond the twig bow or the maize cob doll, but all the objects they use they are taught to yield up on demand from an elder. In adult life the
• [431] man who gives presents to his elder brother, and still more the woman who honours her elder sister, is praised with particular enthusiasm.[2]

[1] Bemba brothers are not in competition with each other for the family inheritance as among the patrilineal cattle-owning people of South Africa. There is little material property to inherit, and in any case the boys marry early in life and hence join different economic and local groups.

[2] When I travelled with my older sister for some weeks in this area I noticed that whenever I carried something for her or gave her precedence, a delighted murmur went up from the watching women: 'She honours her *umukalamba*. Look, she is carrying it for the big one.' It meant conformance to their own code.

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the old custom of giving the father of the girl two or more bark-cloths. In 144 marriage contracts I recorded small sums of money were paid in 86 cases, i.e. 59 per cent., and in six villages where I made marriage censuses an average of 6*s*. 6*d*. was paid for the *mpango* of the girl. The old bark-cloths were replaced by calico cloths, and many *mpango* are still paid in this fashion, and later by the money to buy the cloth. The 10*s*. given the father-in-law as the 'money to cut the trees' is merely the wage for a month's work at European rates.

Baskets, pots, axes, and other objects made by the Bemba craftsmen were always paid for by goods in kind or by service, and for these dues money has been nearly everywhere substituted. Even then, the purchase is not subject to the ordinary laws of demand and supply, since once the regulation sum for a basket or a pot has been fixed at 3*d*. or 6*d*. there it will remain, however scarce the materials of which it is made.

The use of money in Bemba ritual life is largely due to its rarity value. It has the prestige of an object that comes from a foreign country and which is possessed by few members of the community. Before the arrival of the white man it is clear that articles that came from far off, brought by Arabs, or sent as presents to the chiefs, had a particular value, and were kept as presents of honour or marks of status. Hence they were considered particularly suitable as offerings to the ancestral spirits. The use of bark-cloth for this purpose was common here as in other parts of Bantu Africa, but it was not the local bark-cloth that was hung on the shrine of the ancestor, but the valuable calico brought by Arab traders. In the same way I have seen barrels of guns stuck in the ground over the grave of a chief (Cilubi Island on Lake Bangweolu) and have been asked by the Paramount for china plates for the same purpose. He told me that plates or tea-pots had been offered to the spirits in this way in the old days because they were 'valuables' (*ifyuma*) and because 'we had not seen any before'. Cattle taken in war were also considered necessary for some ancestral sacrifices, although the Bemba are not a pastoral people. Money has apparently acquired a similar rarity value which it has not yet lost. A present of a coin is appreciated not only on its own account but because of the kudos it gives. Most Europeans hesitate to give money as a present to an equal or to a superior because it is a currency used for the ordinary run of economic transactions, and therefore seems to give a

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commensurable value to the incommensurable gratitude, friendship, or respect which he wants to express. He prefers to exchange his coins for some other object, possibly of far less practical value to the recipient. The African chief, on the contrary, is more flattered on receiving a coin, however small, than anything else, because, as he says: 'money is respect (*umucinshi*)'. Small coins are constantly used as presents of honour to relatives, and it is quite common for a servant who wants to make an elegant gift to his white master to do so by presenting him with a threepenny or a sixpenny bit. Sums of money are used as compensation in cases of injury or insult.

In particular ceremonies money again performs special functions. At a marriage or an initiation rite coins are used instead of the old bark-cloth, and also as a payment for ritual services or as a means of removing taboos. Sixpence or a shilling may be offered to the woman who lights a girl's fire on the morning after her marriage, to those who whitewash the hut after a funeral ceremony, or to remove a taboo on eating. At the ceremonial founding of the chief's new village there is now a fixed tariff ranging from 1*s*. to 10*s*. for the hereditary priests who are in charge of the rites such as the lighter of the sacred fire, the opener of the sacred relic huts, or those who purify the chief, wake him ceremonially in the morning, or beat his hereditary drum. In all these cases the coins are used as valuables much as the ivory tusks, cloth, or bracelets of old days were employed, and their rarity makes them the most suitable objects available at the present day.

With this special attitude to money, it is not surprising that the Bemba still consider it waste to use coins for the purchase of food. money is too rare and too hardly come by to be thrown away on a commodity that can be got in some other way. Only a few years before my visit an old woman was discovered dying of starvation in a disused hut on the motor road with a 2*s*. piece tied in a fold of her cloth. It had apparently never occurred to her to use the money to buy supplies on her journey to the mines to look for her son. Younger people have naturally changed in this respect, but it is still true to say that money is never 'wasted' (*ukuposa*) on food unless it is absolutely necessary, as it is near the white towns. Even then the transition to a sale from a gift from a kinsman or a subject is a very gradual one. People buying from relatives pay less than the normal rate, and usually add some service to the transaction Chiefs buying from subjects, as we shall see, pay nominal

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sums for a particular object against the background of the complicated interchange of services in which the relationship of chief and commoner consists. They pass from one economic system to the other in the course of a day or a week, and they still consider such transactions irregular or out of the usual. They are not calculating to save money, nor do they rely on it in the ordinary course of events.

The Bemba wants money occasionally, and then in relatively speaking large sums—10*s*. for his tax or 5*s*. for a cloth. These sums he usually wants urgently, and is prepared to make unusual efforts to earn the money or to sell any property he has to get it. Less than a given amount apparently seems to him almost useless. In fact, when opportunities of earning money are so scarce the gap between 1*s*. and 10*s*. may well seem unbridgeable, and hence there is no attempt to save in order to reach the higher sum. I noticed that in the outlying districts natives who brought goods for sale asked for the specific sum they wanted almost irrespective of the amount of food they were selling. If I refused, I was often told: 'Well, 5*s*. is what I want, if you won't give me 5*s*., please take it as a present.' In the latter case the native returned to the old system of exchange by which presents offered put the recipient under an obligation to return and, if possible, to return more than he had been given. In the same way, carriers called out for labour will go on long journeys but do not like to sign up for short ones. The idea of regularly accumulating small sums of money in order to acquire greater ones only exists among natives who have a regular earning capacity, and it is natural that it should be so. The old attitude of the Bemba towards the amassing of food and goods, combined with their present limited opportunities for acquiring money, absolutely prevents the regular saving of money to be used to purchase better food.

The introduction of money has encouraged natives to sell more millet than they should, but its circulation is not sufficient to make it useful as a general means of exchange, and the people's attitude to its use still prohibits them working for a regular sale and exchange of food, such as will be necessary if the kinship system of the people still further breaks down.

Types of Exchange.

In this connexion it will be useful to summarize the traditional attitude of the Bemba towards trade or barter itself, and to describe

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natives are much more free to move about the country than formerly, he would be afraid his subjects would leave him. I have, however, seen a case of a chief borrowing land temporarily. In November 1931 Nkula asked one of the villagers for the use of his garden mounds so that he might sow them with ground-nuts for one season. The word used was *ukuashima*, or 'to borrow', and in this case the original owner of the beds had apparently the right to ask the chief for ground-nuts for the use of his family at any time he pleased. I saw the chief hand him over a large sack on his request. Otherwise the commoner's rights to land he has occupied seem to be respected, and according to native informants the same held good even of the autocratic rulers of pre-European days.

On the other hand it is impossible for a Bemba to cultivate in a chief's territory without the latter's permission. In the old days if one chief trespassed, even unwittingly, on the ground of another, the former had to give a substantial present such as an elephant tusk or a cow to the latter. Nowadays Citimukulu told me he would expect a gift of beer, even if it were a close relative who had made a garden within the boundary of his *icalo*. It is apparently a usual way of picking a quarrel to start cutting trees over another chief's borders, ill-defined though the latter often are. The late Nkula, giving evidence before a white magistrate during a case of disputed succession, said, 'I knew he wanted to claim the stool (i.e. office of chieftainship) because he sent men to cut trees on my land.'

A commoner, as distinct from a fellow chief, has to come and make obeisance to the *mfumu* and ask permission to settle. He usually brings a present to court, and is welcomed as adding to the economic assets of the district. Near Kasama in 1934 I once met Citimukulu touring his villages. Two elderly men from the territory of Makassa, near Abercorn, about 100 miles away, arrived with their younger relatives carrying a gourd of beer. They rolled on the ground and clapped (the usual formal salute) and said they wanted to settle at a certain village, but that the inhabitants were hostile to the suggestion. The Paramount received them with enthusiasm, always keen to add to the number of his subjects. He told them to settle where they wanted to cultivate, and to bring him tribute of what they grew. In the old days failure to get formal permission to cut trees in any *icalo* would have been punished by seizure of half the crop, or the burning of the cut branches

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The Ceremony

The bathing of the girls

The two girls were then taken down to the river to be ceremonially bathed—another rite which follows most Bemba ceremonies. A little beer must still have been hidden away in the village for some of the older women seemed happily drunk. They did intoxicated solo dances in the mud on the water's edge singing:

'*We have gone to fill the pot.*'

They put grass bracelets round the girls' arms saying that they were an earnest of the many things their husbands would give them later.

NINETEENTH DAY

At about five next morning, I was woken by soft clapping outside my tent. I lifted the flap and there knelt the *banacisungu*, washed and shaved and with shining new white handkerchiefs on their heads. They were still in the humble, submissive attitude with eyes on the ground but they answered me quickly with the shy smiles and the little courtesies expected of polite young Bemba girls, their faces for the first time alive and responsive. In fact, the phrase 'rite of transition' began to have a new meaning for me when I remembered the dirty frightened exhausted creatures who had been badgered and pushed through the chisungu weeks, and compared them with these demure and shy young brides. They begged for little presents. Later I watched them kneel and clap obeisance outside each hut in the village. 'They are submitting themselves to the elders' was Nangoshye's proud comment. 'They show they are willing to work for us.'

TWENTY-THIRD DAY

The congratulations (*ukushikula*)

Just as Bemba rites of transition are followed by the *kulishya* or the giving of the freedom to eat, so they are also usually followed by the *ukushikula* or presentation to the community. The chisungu candidate, the bride after her wedding ceremony, and the chief or headman who has succeeded to a new title are all submitted to the same rite. The person who has changed his status is brought out of his hut and placed on a new mat outside its door. He is bathed,

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The Ceremony

881 576 431 oiled, usually shaved and dressed in new clothes and he sits in silence in front of the villagers. These come up in order of seniority and throw small presents on the mat and scold the person who has reached the new status for any faults he has been guilty of in his previous state. This is the *ukushikula*.

On this occasion each of the newly initiated girls sat on a mat with a real or potential husband at their sides. Their kinsmen came up shouting home truths at them as they dropped small bracelets or coins in a basket at their feet. The offerings were then gathered up by Nangoshye and distributed among her helpers. The chisungu rite was at an end.

The wedding ceremony

881 585 The wedding ceremony should have followed closely on the chisungu rite. It consists of the carrying of the bride to her husband's house, the consummation of the marriage when the bridegroom throws a burning faggot out of the door of the hut; and the ritual inauguration of the marriage pot of the young pair. There is [576 431] a further *ukushikula* when the father of the girl gives the young bridegroom an arrow with which to protect her honour. The wedding ceremony was not performed for either of these two girls. One was not betrothed and the bridegroom of the other was at the mines.

881 CALENDAR OF EVENTS AT CHISUNGU PERFORMED AT CHINSALI, NORTH-EASTERN RHODESIA, IN 1931

1*st Day* *Entry into the hut* (*Ukuingishya*)
The blessing of the girls.
The hiding of the girls (*ukusakila*).
The first jump.
The first triumphant return to the village.
The teasing of the girls.

7*th Day* *The first woodland ceremony.*
The gardening mimes.
Honouring the *musuku* tree.
Preparation of the emblem bundles.

4: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1909)1910 FT7 Yao
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rattle who ran in front of it, and by whom the *Zingan* made appearance of being
831 baffled. The performance was witnessed by a circle of women and a few men. When the moon gave evidence of rising the figures disappeared.

The following morning the girl was again brought to the *bwalo* about 11 a.m.
302 and seated on a mat between her "friend" and her mother, while the women
881 danced to the time of seven drums. Her head was anointed with water and shaved, the process was started by a woman and then finished by a man, apparently the village barber; the left side of the head was shaved first. The mother was shaved by a woman at the same time.

While this was going on, presents were being made—maize, beads, a chicken,
[431] tobacco, bracelets, etc. When the shaving was finished several women came and spoke to the girl, after which she was taken away for the bathing in the lake close at hand, returning about 1 p.m. in new blue calico from waist to knees with white sash, the body well oiled all over, to the time of one small drum played by an old man; then, supported on either side by two "friends," she waited a few moments
881 while several women did a few shuffling steps, she then advanced alone and did a
[535] few steps. She then made a present of a chicken and tobacco to the drummer, and then to her father, kneeling to each. Again she danced alone, running to and fro

[532]

FIG. 2.

and spinning round quickly. During this time two masks, the *Sanchuna* and *Nkolola* (Fig. 2), appeared and mixed with crowd, danced about and made funny remarks; they went up to the girl and performed a kind of *danse-du-ventre*.

After thus dancing in the village she goes round to the houses of all her relatives, beginning at her father's house, and repeats the dance together with addition of a little *danse-du-ventre*, the masks (*Sanchuna* and *Nkolola*) go round with her, her immediate attendant being always her "friend." This night and the next day she spends in the house with her friend, the evening of the next day she goes to a
[836] separate house arranged for, and has to have coitus with a man who is asked to oblige; on emission taking place he has to withdraw in time, and the semen is collected on a cloth which has to be seen by the women. The following night she
[584] goes to the house of her betrothed to live with him; she has probably been betrothed since she was an infant.

About the *Sanchuna* and *Nkolola* I could learn nothing. These men wore
[532] masks with calico covering the back of the head and neck, a kilt made of strips of leopard skin and grass bound round their arms and legs.